

• New Machines and Gadgets •

For sources of more information on new things described, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to SCIENCE NEWS LETTER, 1719 N St., N.W., Washington 6, D. C., and ask for Gadget Bulletin 942. To receive this Gadget Bulletin without special request each week, remit \$1.50 for one year's subscription.

⚙️ **FILLING MATERIAL** for upholstered furniture padding, pillows, comforters and sleeping bags is made of polyester cut fibers. The lightweight plastic filler is said to be odor-free, insect- and solvent-resistant and non-allergenic.

Science News Letter, July 5, 1958

⚙️ **SAFETY TRIMMER** has a rotary gear-driven precision cutting wheel. The all metal trimmer has an aluminum board supported on hard-rubber foot rests. Available in four sizes, the heavy-duty trimmer will cut and trim everything from tissue paper to plastics.

Science News Letter, July 5, 1958

⚙️ **MEDICAL SLIDE RULE** developed by a British chest physician has some 80 symptom strips, each marked with a different symptom, stored in its back. Some 340 disease categories are listed on one side of the rule's front. From one to six symptom strips can be inserted under a window for matching and reading.

Science News Letter, July 5, 1958

⚙️ **BEAUTY PARLOR TOY SET** permits little girls to be beauticians to their dolls. The set, part of which is shown in the photograph, includes replicas of actual



beauty parlor equipment, including two automatic positioning chairs, a hair dryer, a sink, two aluminum mirrors and sundries, as well as a booklet showing various hair styles for dolls.

Science News Letter, July 5, 1958

⚙️ **SAFETY GOGGLES** have a plastic frame which holds wide lenses that snap into the frame. Molded of polyethylene

plastic, the one-piece frame extends back over the wearer's temples. Held in place by an adjustable headband, the frame also boasts a contoured nosepiece.

Science News Letter, July 5, 1958

⚙️ **PORTABLE LECTERN** folds up into a flat 14½-by-18-inch size. Made of strong board and bound in leatherette, the lectern weighs four pounds. Unfolded, it is pitched at a 30-degree angle and has a small ledge to keep papers from falling off.

Science News Letter, July 5, 1958

⚙️ **TAPE CLIPS** are designed to keep recording tape from spilling off a reel. Made of resilient plastic, the clips are shaped like the Greek letter omega. The clip is snapped on to one flange of the reel and if the reel is full, one leg of the clip holds the tape in place.

Science News Letter, July 5, 1958

⚙️ **NO-IRON SHEETS** and pillow cases have a wrinkle-resistant, non-chlorine retentive finish. Made of cotton, the material dries in about half the time it takes ordinary cotton sheets. The new sheets can be washed by hand or machine, and with any type of bleach without affecting either color or fabric.

Science News Letter, July 5, 1958



Nature Ramblings



By HORACE LOFTIN

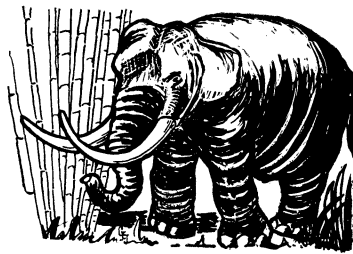
A Long Story

► "HOW THE elephant got his trunk" has been told by Rudyard Kipling in a delightful fantasy. The story pieced together by scientists from fragments of bones buried for thousands or millions of years differs considerably from the story-book version. It is all the more exciting because it is true.

The elephant's trunk developed from the upper lip and nose of the animal. It is well-supplied with nerves and is extremely muscular. The nostrils run the entire length of the trunk.

The degree to which the snout is elongated into a trunk is "recorded" in the bone structure of the head: the longer the snout, the greater the recession of the nasal bones and the thicker adjacent bones become for attachment of muscles. By examining these bones in finds of fossil elephants, paleontologists can estimate just how long the trunks of fossil elephants must have been.

Probably the earliest definitely distinguished form of elephant yet discovered,



from deposits in Africa and Asia about 60,000,000 years old, is the Palaeomastodon. This elephant was small, about the size of a modern baby elephant. It resembled somewhat the tapir of the American tropics.

From a study of bones of the head, scientists determined Palaeomastodon undoubtedly had a very short trunk and a proportionately longer head and neck. There were short tusks in the upper jaw and even shorter lower tusks.

The fossil record from some 20,000,000 to 30,000,000 years later shows a great difference.

The trend in elephant evolution was toward great size, great tusks and long, strong trunks. Apparently, the elephants spread from the center of origin in Africa and Asia across Europe and into almost every corner of North America. And as they spread, they evolved in many different manners.

One form, Dinotherium, had no tusks on the upper jaw; however, the lower tusks were long, turning downward and backward. Another, Platybelodon, varied from the common trend: the lower jaw was elongated and armed with horizontal spade-like teeth, while the "trunk" was a thick, non-tubular covering over the protruding jaw.

Elephants reached their peak in North America during the Ice Age, lasting until perhaps 10,000 years ago or less.

One inhabiting North America at that time was the imperial elephant, Archidiskodon, with tremendous curving tusks, trunk in proportion to modern elephants, that stood 13 feet tall. African elephants today rarely exceed ten feet in height.

Science News Letter, July 5, 1958